

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the pending application is respectfully requested. Claims 30-49 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1-29 were previously canceled. Applicants' Attorney appreciates the interview conducted on Aug. 22, 2006. Applicants' Attorney is currently amending the claims incorporating the agreed changes overcoming the prior art previously applied.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

Claims 30, 33 and 41-46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Barboza et al. (U.S. Patent 5,681,469). Regarding Claim 30, Barboza et al. fails to disclose a second rotating collector surface being spaced from a first rotating collector surface as well as a transfer and orientation means positioned between the first and second collector surfaces to orient and transfer a first layered mat portion from the first rotating collector surface the second rotating collector surface as currently claimed in Claim 30. Barboza et al. discloses a first collector being adjacent a second collector where both collectors directly transfer material to a mat portion being formed there between. There is no space between the collectors in Barboze et al. nor is there a transfer and orientation means positioned between the first and second collectors. Therefore, Barboze et al. fails to disclose each and every claim limitation of Claim 30, hence, Applicant's Attorney respectfully requests this rejection be withdrawn.

Regarding Claim 33, Applicant is currently claiming at least two longitudinally extending cylindrical rotatable collectors and at least one longitudinally extending idler roller, wherein at least one of said at least one longitudinally extending idler roller is positioned between each of

said at least two longitudinally extending cylindrical rotatable collectors. Barboze et al. discloses a frustoconical collector adjacent a cylindrical collector without an idler roller there between. Therefore, Barboze et al. fails to disclose each and every claim limitation of Claim 33, hence, Applicant's Attorney respectfully requests this rejection be withdrawn. Additionally, Claims 41-45 depend from Claim 33 and have the claim limitations of Claim 33 through claim dependency, therefore Applicant's Attorney requests these rejections be withdrawn as well.

Regarding Claim 46, Applicant is claiming a first and second cylindrical rotatable collector having cylindrical axes substantially horizontally aligned and having a space there between and at least one cylindrical rotatable idler roller having a cylindrical axis substantially horizontally aligned below said cylindrical axes of said first and second cylindrical rotatable collectors and having a cylindrical surface between cylindrical surfaces of said first and second cylindrical rotatable collectors. Again, Barboze et al. discloses a frustoconical collector adjacent a cylindrical collector without an idler roller there between. Therefore, Applicant's Attorney requests this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 30-33, 37-38 and 41-46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Frickert et al. (U.S. Patent 2,875,503). Frickert et al. discloses:

The strands 20 and 21 are drawn through a guide eye 25 along with strands 20' and 21' of the second half of the forming stage. All four strands produced in each stage are pulled by a single pair of mated pulling wheels 22 (see Figures 4 to 6).

Frickert et al. fails to disclose rotatable collectors as currently claimed in Claims 30-33, 37-38 and 41-46 but instead discloses pulling fibers through a guide eye with pulling wheels.

Since each and every claim limitation is not disclosed in Frickert et al., Applicant's Attorney respectfully requests this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 30-33, 37-38 and 41-46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Loubinoux et al. (U.S. Patent 5,425,796). Specifically, Examiner alleges that FIG. 1, item 9 in Loubinoux et al. is a collecting surface. Loubinoux et al. discloses:

The filaments 5 then pass over a roller 9 which first allows them to be gathered together in the form of a sheet 10 and secondly redirects their path. Loubinoux et al., col. 4, ln. 58 – 61.

As seen in FIG. 1 and described in the above excerpt, Loubinoux et al. fails to disclose a collecting surface as currently claimed but instead discloses rollers for redirecting fibers. Therefore, Applicant's Attorney respectfully requests this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 30, 33-36 and 41-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Nishino et al. (U.S. Patent 5,628,844). Nishino et al. teaches:

Referring to FIG. 3, a process of manufacturing the topsheet 2 is schematically illustrated. The process comprises a first molding step 28 utilizing a molding drum 30 and first and second melt-blown extruders 31, 32 provided around the molding drum 30 and a second molding step 29 utilizing an endless belt 33 and a third melt-blown extruder 34 provided above the endless belt 33. It should be understood that, when it is desired to form the first sheet 7 as the single-layered sheet, any one of the first and second melt-blown extruders 31, 32 may be suspended. Nishino et al., col. 6, lns. 25-34.

As can be seen in the excerpt, Noshino et al. fails to teach collecting surfaces as currently claimed. Additionally, Noshino et al. fails to teach a transfer and orientation means as Examiner alleges in FIG. 3, item 37. Item 37 is an opening, as defined in Noshino et al., col. 7, ln. 4.

Since Noshino et al. fails to disclose the current invention as claimed, Applicant's Attorney respectfully requests this rejection be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 39, 40 and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over any of Barboza et al. (U.S. Patent 5,681,469), Frickert et al. (U.S. Patent 2,875,503), Loubinoux et al. (U.S. Patent 5,425,796) or Nishino et al. (U.S. Patent 5,628,844). As previously shown, each of these references fails to disclose the currently claimed invention. Additionally, none of these references, alone, or in combination, teach or suggest the currently claimed invention. Hence, Applicant's Attorney respectfully requests this rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Applicant's Attorney asserts that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Applicant's Attorney therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner allow the pending claims. However, if the Examiner believes there are other unresolved issues in this case, Applicant's Attorney of record would appreciate a call at (502) 584-1135.

Respectfully submitted,

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